

THEY ARE TO BE PITIED, THE PAWNS IN THE HANDS OF THEIR OWNER WHO PAYS THEIR WAGE

By Jane Whitaker.

When I first saw those foolish little girls who are earning their wages from Knab the restaurant man by annoying the union girl pickets, whose positions they have taken, I felt like shaking each of the girls and saying to her:

"Are you so very foolish that you do not realize that you are fighting against your sister-workers, you who have already taken their positions from them? Are you so blind that you do not realize that the man who asks you to do this contemptible thing is a man who cannot possibly be a friend of labor organized or unorganized?"

Are you so ignorant that you do not understand that when you help him in his effort to defeat organized labor, you are acknowledging that you do not want better wages, better hours, better working conditions, that you are content to be the plaything of capital, paid \$8 a week so long as a battle is on that forces your employer to pay it, and paid what he pleases when the battle is through?

And then, as I watched the tactics these girls who are earning their wages from Knab have resorted to in order that they may continue to earn the wages, as I watched them employ every petty feminine trick to arouse the anger of the union pickets, as I watched them crowding on the heels of the other girls, walking beside them and regulating their steps so that the union pickets could not prevent this, as I saw these girls paid by Knab making such a pitiful contrast between their own petty devices and the dignity the union girls were preserving, I became conscious of a great pity for them.

They are to be pitied—oh, so deeply pitied. Victims of the system, they are pawns in the hands of their owner, the man who pays them their wage.

Victims of the system, what choice have they but to be traitors to their sister workers if they want to keep their own jobs on which, perhaps, their very existence depends?

Even their blindness that lets them forge stronger the chains that bind them as industrial slaves, their blindness that causes them to fight the girls that are trying to help them, the girls who are trying to make conditions better for them—even this blindness is a thing to pity.

And my contempt is not for the poor, foolish little girls, it is for the man who believes the wage he pays them as waitresses entitles him to place them on the streets, to be stared

at and spoken to by the curious, to be jostled, to make sorry little spectacles of themselves.

And not alone has Knab done this, but he has done what to me seems still more contemptible.

He is trying to add fuel to race prejudice by having negro women walk behind these union girls at some of his restaurants. He is playing upon the racial hatred of the negroes, else women who have no interest in this fight would not lend themselves to this scheme, and he is playing on the racial hatred of the white, studiously, to make it seem insulting to the girls who are and have battled so hard to elevate themselves and their sister-workers.

And the man who has done this thing, this man Knab, is telling you that he will treat his girls as well without recognizing the union as he would if he were forced to recognize it.

I have believed many curious things in my lifetime, even that the moon was made of green cheese, but I am not sufficiently credulous to believe this. I frankly do not believe that a man who hires girls as wait-